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Roman Epic Films Complement *The Lost Ancient City* Exhibition at CMA

Shorts by Acclaimed Czech Animator Also Featured in April

CLEVELAND — Roman film epics from the 1950s and 60s will highlight the April film series at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), complementing **Antioch: The Lost Ancient City** (on view Mar. 25 through June 3, 2001). Slaves and emperors, gladiators and soldiers, Christians and lions, meals and orgies — these are only a few of the standard ingredients in the ancient-world extravaganzas that filled movie screens during the mid-20th century. "There were no computer-generated crowds in these pre-*Gladiator* epics; the casts of thousands were real," notes John Ewing, CMA's film program coordinator. "Our Antioch show affords a perfect opportunity to revisit some of these rip-roaring classic spectacles."

Rounding out the April film line-up are selections by Czech animator Karel Zeman (1910–1989), considered one of the most distinctive and influential animators of the Post-War era. A former poster designer and window dresser, he made short advertising films for the Bata Shoe Factory before entering the Czech film industry in the mid-1940s. There he created the wooden puppet character Mr. Prokouk, who was featured in a series of popular shorts, and experimented with glass figurines. His early features combine puppets with live actors, and his later ones add animated wood engravings and fantastic trick effects to the mix. Zeman found international fame with such classics as *The Fabulous World of Jules Verne* (1958) and *The Fabulous Baron Munchausen* (1961).

The Zeman series, consisting of 35mm prints from the Czech Republic, was organized by the American Cinematheque and coordinated by the Czech Center, New York.

All films will take place in the Lecture Hall or Gartner Auditorium. Admission is $6 ($4 CMA members).

Complete April film listings follow.

April Films ($6, $4 CMA members and children 12 and under. No children admitted to *Satyricon*.)

Quo Vadis?
Sunday, April 1, 1:45 p.m.
(USA, 1951, color, 35mm, 171 min.) Directed by Mervyn LeRoy, with Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr, and Peter Ustinov. A Roman soldier falls in love with a Christian woman in this incredibly lavish epic set during the reign of Nero. From Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel; music by Miklos Rozsa.

Early Zeman Short Films
Wednesday, April 4, 7 p.m.
(Czechoslovakia, 1946-55, b&w, subtitles, 35mm, total 89 min.) Directed by Karel Zeman. Nine early shorts by the great Czech animator, including *The Christmas Dream* (1946), *Inspiration* (1949), and an assortment of Mr. Prokouk cartoons.

The Fabulous World of Jules Verne
Friday, April 6, 7 p.m.
(Czechoslovakia, 1958, b&w, subtitles, 90 min.) Directed by Karel Zeman. Three Jules Verne stories are combined and brought to life in this dazzling fantasy that combines live actors with animated engravings. Also known as *An Invention for Destruction.* Preceded at 7 p.m. by Zdenek Rozkopal's 20-min. short *The Fabulous World of Karel Zeman* (1962).

The Fall of the Roman Empire
Sunday, April 8, 1:45 p.m.
(USA, 1964, color, 35mm, 153 min.) Directed by Anthony Mann, with Sophia Loren, Stephen Boyd, and Alec Guinness. With Barbarians at the gate, Roman rivals vie for the Imperial throne. This thoughtful, expansive historical epic is now regarded as one of the best. 'Scope print.

Journey to the Beginning of Time
Wednesday, April 11, 7 p.m.
(Czechoslovakia, 1954, color, 35mm, subtitles, 75 min.) Directed by Karel Zeman. A group of children goes back to the time of dinosaurs in this charming fantasy that combines live action and animation.

The Robe
Friday, April 13, at 6:45 p.m.
(USA, 1953, color, 35mm, 135 min.) Directed by Henry Koster, with Richard Burton, Jean Simmons, and Victor Mature. A Roman centurion who presides over Christ's crucifixion finds his life changed. This famous religious drama was the first film shot in Cinemascope.

The Fabulous Baron Munchausen
Wednesday, April 18, 7 p.m.
(Czechoslovakia, 1961, color, 35mm, subtitles, 90 min.) Directed by Karel Zeman. A German nobleman boasts of his adventures that took him from the belly of a whale to the surface of the moon in this inventive animated tall tale inspired by the engravings of Gustave Dore.

Fellini Satyricon
Friday, April 20, 6:45 p.m.
Sunday, April 22, 2 p.m.
(Italy, 1969, color, subtitles, 35mm, 129 min.) Directed by Federico Fellini. Here's a stunning new 35mm color and 'scope print (with new unexpurgated subtitles) of Fellini's overindulgent, orgiastic evocation of ancient Rome, loosely based on Petronius' naughty, bawdy, hedonistic classic. Adults only.

War of the Fools
Wednesday, April 25, 7 p.m.
(Czechoslovakia, 1964, b&w, subtitles, 35mm, 82 min.) Directed by Karel Zeman. This remarkable animated film, set during the Thirty Years' War, tells of two men and a young girl who search for a land without bloodshed. Also known as *The Jester's Tale.*

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum
Friday, April 27, 7 p.m.
Sunday, April 29, 2 p.m.
(USA, 1966, color, 35mm, 98 min.) Directed by Richard Lester, with Zero Mostel, Phil Silvers, Jack Gilford, Buster Keaton, and Michael Crawford. A great cast animates this frantic, funny film version of Stephen Sondheim's farcical musical, about a Roman slave who will stop at nothing to win his freedom. New print.

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